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AN

APPENDIX TO LETTERS

REGARDING THE

Shipping Interest,

WITH REFERENCE

TO THE IMPORTATION

OF

FIR-TIMBER AND DEALS

IN

BRITISH SHIPS.

London :

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1821.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

AS the annexed Letters are submitted to general perusal, the writer is desirous of manifesting his most cordial and hearty concurrence in that newly adopted or revived idea, viz. the necessity of promoting a *Free Trade*; and of stating, that he is not actuated by conformity to prejudices, nor does he adopt the opinion of the last age as standard truth: far from it; and he trusts the attentive reader will interpret his views quite otherwise; for he is obviously attempting to accompany, *straight forward*, the march of intellect, by a hitherto untrodden path: but with *our Act of Navigation* for his *Pilot*, intent on facilitating "Freedom in Traffic," although not to *barter* away our country's safety, nor to dispense with extending the nursery *for Sailors*, when so fair an opening presents itself!

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LETTER I.

SIR,

My views by this appeal, are directed solely and abstractedly to the interests of this Country, considered in relation to its maritime prosperity, the pre-eminent local or insular position in which Providence has placed it, and combining with it the benefits that ought to be derived by the Ship-ownery and the Navy generally. —During half a century, it has been my lot to be connected with, and engaged in, maritime concerns. I have in the greater part of that period, in a manner sojourned amongst the sea-faring classes of the community, and have learned to know them. I have noticed their rise and their decline, with the vicissitudes produced by Peace and by War: I have received information from men of sterling worth amongst them, touching the important benefits Great Bri-

tain has derived, by the enactment of *her Navigation Laws*.

Thus, as a Citizen and Subject, I am led to consider it my paramount duty to submit at this juncture, to the best of my slender abilities, the subsequent observations, in the confident hope, that a matter pregnant with the most portentous results, will be taken up by men of real consideration.

It appears to me highly requisite, that persons ought to be consulted who are perfectly conversant and well acquainted with what *has been* the state and situation of Commerce and Navigation during *former* intervals of Peace, when all Europe was tranquil; because the Legislature are now engaged in framing regulations for such a happy state. By far the greater part of mankind, at this time engaged in active life, has grown up under and amidst the "din and horrors of War," and a War too, of the most uncommon nature, especially

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as it affected Commercial Dealings and Mercantile Transactions: hence it arises, that many well-meaning persons argue hypothetically, from mistaken notions and upon erroneous data, and draw inferences that are totally irreconcilable with a Peace System!—Wooden walls are Britain's walls of brass: "None rule the balanced world, but they that rule the main." (A) Ships are our castles; Mariners, and Mariners only, are competent to garrison them; but Seamen cannot be procured *by money*, like Army Recruits; Sailors must be regularly trained ere they pass muster. A redundancy of real Seamen will produce another happy consequence—it will obviate the anomaly of *Christians impressing their fellow-countrymen* when the exigency of the State requires their aid: furthermore, an ample number of Sailors will prevent a recurrence of mischiefs, not to say misfortunes, such as took place when Admiral Rodney had to man the ships captured from the French; also, when Admiral Parker was engaged with the Dutch, on the Dog-

gerbank ; likewise, when Admiral Howe was obliged to tarry in Torbay, before he could proceed to capture the enemy's fleet of 300 sail of loaded Merchant Ships ; and more recently, when Admiral Nelson had to send home for fresh-water Sailors and Lightermen to man the Danish ships. (B.) But all these are trifles in comparison with other cases ; all demonstrating the impetuous, the absolute necessity that the Legislature should seize the opportunity now presenting itself for augmenting the number of Seamen, by fostering the Timber and Deal Trade from our Colonies, in lieu of the Norway Trade, by Norwegian vessels. An exclusion of Norway Ships may promote the welfare of our Ship-Ownery, and render the situation of seafaring men, men that " plough the main," comfortable, nay, even *prosperous*. Who that reflects on *their* perilous calling, *their* arduous, boisterous life, but must wish to tender *them* every earthly remuneration for their toil ? Perhaps by the boon alluded to, Ship-Ownery may become most profitable : well, and

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what of that?—Is not every Briton entitled to participate in that trade? Will not all trades find a level when left to take their course? (C) Let us first acquire a superabundance of Sailors, and *afterwards* resort to measures of counteraction. This, surely, is not the proper time to blink at Naval strength! Investigate the cause of American Ships of War overpowering ours, and it will be found that their crews consisted of a greater portion of *able seamen* than ours did. All naval men will allow, that *mental* metal is not a slight equivalent for solid ore in sea fights.

During the intervals of Peace, both prior and subsequent to the first American War, the Shipping Concerns became excessively depressed; many Ship-Owners were reduced to the necessity of disposing of their Ships, and obliged "to go to sea again," nearly penniless, and at an advanced age; the business, in fact, fell into a comparative state of penury, for want of profitable em-

ployment; at the same time, our ports were crowded with Norwegian Ships, bringing nothing but wood! The average number of cargoes thus furnished by them to Great Britain, was nearly 2600 per annum. Now admitting such a supply had to come from a distance equal to that of our Colonies, it would employ about 2000 Ships, manned by 30,000 Sailors! Reasons such as these must operate to convince the Legislature of the insufficiency of the arguments brought forward by the advocates for the *Norway* Shipping interest. Our Rulers, therefore, cannot be too guarded against mis-statements and partial representations, lest the golden opportunity be lost for placing our Naval Power on a more firm and effective footing. We have lived to experience a practical illustration of the kind of *assistance* we have *to rely upon*, in time of need, from Foreign Seamen, at *Antwerp and elsewhere!* (D) Are we now going to institute or to promote a nursery for Alien Seamen, in preference to our own?

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Prudence restrains me from dilating on this question ; but you will know how to apply the hint.

Governments are liable to receive wrong and interested information when they require honest statements on Commercial topics : numberless instances have occurred of evidence being tendered from selfish motives, and by the presumptuous. The love of gain too frequently supplants the love for our country,—“*Amor Patriæ*” merges into a speculation of what may be *gained by treating it as a farce!!!* Lest this should be deemed an invidious insinuation, let the following instance of a case be borne in mind : In 1794, Government contracted for the delivery of masts at £8 per load, and obtained them at one-third less than others tendered : yet they were afterwards led to approve of a scheme by which *another person* offered to procure masts,—but were deceived, for they had to pay nearly double that price. (E)

In conclusion, let me add, that one of the wisest men has observed—"History affords ample proof, that in exact proportion as nations have swerved from institutions" (like our Act of Navigation) "by which they had attained wealth and power, so they have retrograded and sunk, to rise no more!"

"Felix quem faciunt aliena pericula cautum."

I am, Sir,

Yours, &c.

J. G. H.

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LETTER II.

SIR,

MUCH erudition and skill in arithmetic is being displayed by advocates for the Norway Trade, in order to point out the difference *in the price* of Norway wood and wood of other countries, with a view to induce a relaxation in the existing duty, &c. &c. Nothing is farther from my purpose than to check or thwart a free ingress of all commodities; nothing is more delightful to me than the idea of *Free Trade*, ~~low~~ duties, and mutual commerce with all the world! But when I contemplate the utility of a Nursery for Sailors, the strength of our Navy, it appears strange how any honest, thinking Briton can sit down to calculate *the price*, by *pounds, shillings and pence*, of the value of Britain's bulwark, or, I may say, the price of a ship's main-

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G. H.

stay, without which no rational being would venture in his bark to sea ! Futile, therefore, do most of the answers given of late appear, when reflected upon and weighed in a proper scale. But another phantom is conjured up, by way of preventing us from relying on any other safe supply of wood, except from Norway, forsooth, namely, *the dry rot*—yes, the dry rot ! Oh, thou monster, “thou com’st indeed in a *questionable shape* !” A thing just as little understood as the theory by which we presume to explain the cause of the heat of the sun ! A perfect phenomenon,—an evil against which nothing approaching to a real remedy has yet been discovered. Ships of war, built entirely of English oak, have become infested by it in less than two years. The oldest men conversant in the Timber Trade, are at a loss to account for it in all woods ; even hard-burnt *bricks* are found to be subject to its ravages ; yet still some men (according to report) say, “*they know all about it !*” Away with such indefinite objections, such irrelevant and vague calcu-

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lations, when the Legislature demand solid arguments and substantial proofs for their guidance ! Doubtless, the existing duty on Timber and Deals is enormously high, is too burdensome, and, in point of political economy, is impolitic. Let it be lowered, but without subverting the established mode or rule, and with an eye to the safety and advantage of this country, by a *total exclusion* of Foreign Ships with *wood cargoes*. Then you will approximate,—then you will embrace that wished-for object—*Free Trade*.

To tax your own Colonial wood, is not, surely, consistent with the spirit or principle of Free Trade ! *A Bounty* on wood imported from our own Settlements might, with greater propriety, be required, *under existing circumstances* ; however, arrangements such as would leave the Colonist no ground for discontent, may easily be made when once the Shipping Interest has attained its grand *desideratum*.

To meet the objection against our excluding Foreign Ships from participating in the Timber Trade, it should be remembered, that the Norwegians do in fact *covertly* shut their ports against our Shipping; for they allow all Deals loaded *upon deck* to pass their Customs exempt from duty. Hence their Merchantmen are built with a very deep Waste, capable of stowing nearly one-fourth of the entire cargo *above deck*, and by that means the Export Duty is evaded, to the amount of from about £20 to £30 on each cargo: whereas a British-built flush-decked Ship pays the Impost on the whole cargo; added to which, the Pilotage, &c. are much higher on British Ships: so that, in two or three voyages, a saving of full £100 accrues to the Norwegian—a sum equal, in time of peace, to the usual profit in that Trade, by British Importers, with the exception of those who can, it seems, afford to monopolize the Traffic, by making advances of £100,000, and thus engrossing the Trade, pampering their thirst for wealth,

but disregarding the injury thereby done to others !

“ Who can all sense of others' woe escape,

“ Is but at best a brute in human shape.”

If to the number of British Merchant Vessels were added from 1000 to 1500, that useful, numerous, and, in general, meritorious class of gentlemen, Lieutenants in the Royal Navy, (on half-pay of only about £90 per annum,) would, on the exclusion of Foreign Ships from the Timber-carrying Trade, become Commanders of such Vessels, and thus render their situation somewhat consistent with the rank they bear. Doubtless, the sphere they move in forbids them to accept of inferior employment in the Merchant Service, lest the dignity of the British Navy should thereby be insulted ; yet their continued occupation in nautical pursuits would prove of great national benefit, by their application during Peace

to a science of such vital importance to
this country.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Yours, &c.

J. G. H.

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LETTER III.

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SIR,

J. G. H.

You remark, that in my preceding Letters to you, an obscurity pervades them, which you urge me to avoid, in order that you may become fully informed on a subject of such apparent importance, from a source of much experience : accept my acknowledgments for this mark of your consideration. You will please to call to mind, my Letters are unaided productions, and although emanating from a sense of man's ingratitude, they are well meant towards the nation at large. As to experience, it has been, and, no doubt, will ever be admitted, that "*Experience* will make even "*fools* wise." I cannot, therefore, claim merit for what light you derive through me, knowing it to be the result of sad experience !

You say, I have not defined my plan regarding the Wood Duty : indeed, Sir, I have not *planned* any thing of the kind ; I was applied to from a quarter I wished to oblige, and it was that which has led me thus far, to throw out what observations and remarks I thought it requisite to make. The hints of *humble* individuals on matters of political economy, when taken up by Government, are liable to misrepresentation ; perhaps prudence forbids it should be otherwise. On a retrospective view of what I have written to you, it will be found my wishes are uniform, are systematically grounded, on the well-being of the Seafaring Class, yet only so *prima facie*, because when that portion of Britons are well off, all the rest must participate in the prosperity. I have framed my suggestions under an apprehension that our Legislature were not yet inclined to listen to an alteration of the existing system of levying the Wood Duty, and thus I was induced to recommend, *not to lower*, nor *to graduate* them, much less to repeat what the great Earl of Chatham deprecated with

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his dying breath. when he said, " Though
 it might not deprive the King of his crown,
 it would render it not worth his wearing,"
 viz. taxing infant Colonies or their pro-
 duce: of course I, with humble, though
 real admiration, for the memory of that
 illustrious statesman and patriot, cautioned
 against laying on any duty on Colonial wood,
 unless it were done upon arithmetical prin-
 ciples.

To accede more nearly to your request, I
 take leave to state, that since the Ministers
 are now inclined to swerve from the old sys-
 tem, respecting the Timber and Deal Duty,
 and to deviate from *that mode* which both
 Mr. Pitt and Mr. Fox thought admirably
 projected, — let them not do the busi-
 ness *by halves*, or they will run the risk in
 so doing, of being deemed temporisers in
 legislating, and perhaps their very advisers
 will be foremost to deprecate measures
 which themselves have *covertly* misled their
 Government to adopt, having in the mean
 time filled their pockets by plans origi-

nating in cupidity and its concomitant crimes.

Yes, it would, in my apprehension, be *preferable*, if, with the proviso of excluding the foreign flags from our ports, when wood-loaded, the existing duty were to be lowered to *one-half*, or even *one-third*, accompanied, as I have already said, with proper guards and protection for British welfare and security in all its ramifications. Such, in fact, it is the bounden duty of the Legislature to attend to, without favour or affection to former acquaintance; or, if you please, without regret at the annihilation of fettered and restricted Commerce.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Yours,

J. G. H.

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LETTER IV.

SIR,

I lose no time in most readily complying with your request, that I would give my opinion on the sad effect said to have been produced in Norway, in consequence of our high, and, in your mind, prohibitory duty on Timber and Deals. You are already informed that I, too, deprecate *enormous* duties; believe me also when I say, I sympathise with the Norwegian nation in their present distressed state. Several of the persons you mention are well known to me, and you do them only justice by your remarks concerning them; yet you too, do not step beyond the bounds of what is allowed to be the first law of nature, *self-preservation*; nor do you dispute the truth of that maxim, "*Salus populi, suprema est lex.*" Thus, then, we are again both agreed.

G. H.

To avoid prolixity in offering you the answer you desire, allow me to address you as if you were a citizen of Norway, or representing the Norwegians at large.

“ My friends, You are indeed become the victims to a furiously procrastinated war ; you have sustained great and severe trials, and you are still suffering from the wounds you received ; but look around on all Europe, and forbear complaining !

“ Discard your plans for creating anew a nursery for your Navy ; you know that the great Maritime Powers can blockade your sea-ports, can prevent your receiving necessary supplies of food, &c. Admitting, for argument’s sake, that you were to lose *entirely* your export of wood to Great Britain, may you not console yourselves by throwing aside the axe, and grasping the plough in its stead ; by employing your labourers in the cultivation of your numerous fertile valleys ; in short, by sedalously attending to agricultural pursuits, and improving both

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your arable and pasture lands? *Quidnuncs* may deride these notions as misapplied when speaking of *Norway* as an agricultural country; but your *landed interest* will not laugh at it. To those, however, who are disposed to do so, I say,

‘Per risum multum,

‘Debes cognoscere stultum;’

and proceed to remark, that when you have secured to yourselves, and within your own territory, a sufficient growth and an abundant supply of the *staff of life*, you may avoid sending all the money you can raise by the sale of your wood, to buy bread with in Pomerania; you may discontinue an improvident trade, which only serves to pamper proud foreigners, from whom, in return, you require nothing necessarily, but what by your energies might be had among yourselves, or, at least, may be bartered for elsewhere. Commerce, to be profitable, must consist in barter, and that too in direct, rather than in indirect exchange.

“ Your country is fortified by nature with peculiar care ; ramparts surround you which afford you shelter, and insure you peaceful homes ; you cannot easily be *assailed* from without, on either side ; much less likely is it, that hostile bands can march through your country to lay it waste. But should they dare to trespass and attack you, you have *iron*, you have hands and arms to wield that metal in your *defence*, and we know that you have hearts to sustain *defensive* warfare when compelled to it. Thank God, that, as Christians, the former warlike spirit, or rather lust for conquest, possessed by your ancestors, has subsided ; but ages spent by you in cultivating the peaceful arts of life have not sufficed to obliterate the stain with which your forefathers dyed themselves by their thirst after inordinate power and plunder. Once more permit me to advert to your apprehensions on the score of Great Britain’s arrangement for the Wood Trade.

Rest satisfied that the Canada Merchant
may justly say,

‘ Although we both one prey pursue,
‘ There’s game enough for me and you ;’

only beware of wolves that come amongst
you in sheep’s clothing.

“ Norway possesses various means for trafficking and for interchange in Commerce. She finds sale for her Wood in other countries *besides* Great Britain. May it not also be made a question, how far her hitherto extensive sale of Wood in Great Britain has proved advantageous *to her*? What is the *upshot*? How has it terminated?—In general bankruptcy! True, some of their agents remain creditors for £200,000 ;—a mere fraction of the profits they derived from the axe-labour of Norwegians.

“ It would be to question your good sense, were I to point out the absolute obligation under which Great Britain is placed, not

to dispense with a formidable Navy ; she must, therefore, maintain an extensive nursery for Sailors. Her Act of Navigation is founded on a basis far grander than that of a merely Trading Interest ; she is by nature destined to hold the Trident, for the security of others, as well as for her own undisturbed existence. Occasional or partial *abuse of power* is not a proof of the inutility of power in the abstract :

‘ Some are and must be greater than the rest.’

“ Good Norwegians, follow peace.

‘ Nothing extenuate,

‘ Nor aught set down in malice.’ ”

If some such admonition and advice fail of its wished-for good effect on the Norwegians, then let pride and vanity abide their fate !

I remain,

J. G. H.

POSTSCRIPT.

It is not to be denied but that the transfer of employment for Norway Ships to that of British Vessels must be felt by the Norwegians as a grievance, and that they will *endeavour* to resent it ; but let us recollect how great the struggle was on the part of Holland and the Netherlands, when the Exportation of British Wool ceased. The Government of Holland remonstrated against the measure as inimical to their subjects, nor did they cease their entreaties, &c. until Cromwell directed his Ambassador at the Hague to tell the Dutch Government, that the next application on the score of the prohibition alluded to, he would look upon as a *declaration of war*, and should proceed accordingly. You opulent cloth-makers, and you who now earn a comfortable subsistence by the cloth or woollen manufactory, say, whether our Government acted right in disregarding foreign

clamours when legislating for their subjects' weal and for their empire's safety! See also Mr. Pitt's Speech *on the 12th May*, 1789, regarding *his opinion*, on a hint thrown out, that *other powers* might refuse compliance with Mr. Wilberforce's *benevolent* scheme to abolish the Slave Trade; a measure analogous to that of excluding foreign ships from our Wood Trade, because in both instances a diminution of foreign shipping is the effect produced by our *new* measures. If by our Naval Power the Spanish Armada was prevented from enslaving us, it must be also an act of *benevolence* to embrace every opportunity that offers to keep our Navy in full strength; this will justify *my allusion to Mr. Pitt's opinion*.

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NOTES.

(A) To rule the Main by no means implies an arbitrary or despotic sway, but a power only to guard against aggression and to support the impotent.

(B) Those Danish Ships, in case they had been overtaken by a storm on their passage to England, might all have perished for want of skill and seamanship, like those captured by Admiral Rodney; for it was unequivocally admitted, that our Admiral could not man his Prizes with *prime* navigators!

(C) There is a material distinction to be made between suffering Commerce and Traffic to take its course, and providing for the safety of the State. As a Maritime Power, we require Colonies, Trade, and principally in fact, *in primis*, Ships.

(D) This is a picture true in its outline, and not heightened in its colouring. Such facts must lead to the conclusion, that a nursery for Sailors in this Empire cannot be too sedulously attended to; and every proposition to contract, instead of extending, the sphere on which our brave and unsophisticated Naval fellow-countrymen move, is radically bad—is Anti-Patriotic—if not even a species of treason to the State!

(E) The man who fulfilled his Contract for a specified quantity of Masts, &c. for £200,000, and at £100,000 below the tenders of all others, was supplanted, ruined, and degraded; and he who pretended to do the business on more advantageous terms, but proved mistaken by about Cent. per Cent., charged for his trouble £60,000 as agency, &c.!!! How chagrined must a high-minded, upright Administration feel on discovering such turpitude on the part of their advisers! How necessary, then, the caution against receiving evidence in matters where *the interest of individuals* and that of the country are interwoven!



